

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

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TO SECSTATE IMMEDIATE 6364

CONFIDENTIAL LA PAZ 5773

FOR ARA/AND/B AND SCS; FOR DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY STEDMAN

E.O. 11652 GDS
TAGS: CARR, BL
SUBJ: AMERICAN PRISONERS: ALLEGED EXTORTION SCHEME IN SANTA CRUZ

REFS: A. LA PAZ 5766
B. STATE 172201
C. LA PAZ 5767

1. DUE LA PAZ CEREMONIAL EVENT IN WHICH HE INVOLVED, WAS UNABLE
ARRANGE APPOINTMENT WITH MINISTER PEREDA BUT MET WITH SUB-
SECRETARY OF JUSTICE BALLIVIAN JULY 23 AT 5:00 P.M.

2. I TOLD BALLIVIAN OF DEPARTMENTS GREAT CONCERN OVER PRISONERS
AT
SANTA CRUZ, THAT CONSUL KEMP HAD BEEN SENT THER TO TAKE PRECAUTIONS
AS
TO SAFETY AND THAT DEPT HAD BROUGHT MATTER TO ATTENTION AMB CRESPO.
I THEN REVEIUED CONTENT OF STATEMENTS BY CUNNIGHAM, MARRERO AND
AULT, BUT THIS TIME GAVE BALLIVIAN ALL NAMES OF BOLIVIANS INVOLVED IN
EXTROTION ATTEMPT. TOLD HIM ALSO THAT I HAD BEEN UNABLE TO CONTACT
PEREDA.

3. BALLIVIAN, GREATLY UPSET, SAID MINISTER MUST BE TOLD
IMMEDIATELY
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HE PHONED MINISTER, WHO FORTUNATELY AT HOME, EXPLANED GIST OF
MATTER,
AND PEREDA ASKED US TO COME HIS HOUSE AT ONCE.

4. WE WENT OVER EXTORTION ATTEMPT IN FULL DETAIL WITH PEREDA. HE
WELL ACQUAINTED WITH NAME HUGO MENACHO WHO SAID WAS CHEAP CROOK

INVOLVED WITH DRUGS. ALSO SAID THEY PRETTY SURE HUGO ORTIZ JUSTINIAN
O
WAS UNSAVORY LAWYER ALSO IN DRUG ACTIVITY. PEREDA UNSURE OF
COL. CAMACHO
HIS SERVICE RECORD GOOD, AND CAMACHO RECENTLY HAD VOLUNTARILY
REPORTED
VANDEVORT'S ATTEMPT TO BRIBE HIM. (PREVIOUSLY REPORT TO DEPT)
NEVERTHELESS, PEREDA SAID CAMACHO COULD BE SUBJECT INVESTIGATION BY
POLICE AS COULD JUDGES APONTE AND ROBLES.

5. I EMPHASIZED MAIN CONCERN OF U.S. WAS GUARANTY OF PRISONERS
SAFETY AND RELIEF FROM PRESSURE OF EXTORTION ATTEMPTS. I SAID WE
WOULD WISH, ASSUMING SAFETY OF PRISONERS ASSURED, TO PROCEED
AGAINST
JUDGES WITH CAUTION AND ONLY IF THEY CLEARLY INVOLVED
IN EXTORTION BECAUSE REMOVAL OF EITHER JUDGE APONTE OR ROBLES WOULD
CAUSE DELAY IN CUNNINGHAM/AULT/SCANLAN AND MARRERO CASES.

6. AFTER DISCUSSION HAD GONE ON ABOUT FORTY MINUTES, COL. LINO
PEREZ, COMMANDER OF BOLIVIAN NATIONAL POLICE APPEARED AT HOUSE,
APPARENTLY SUMMONED BY PEREDA AFTER PEREDA'S PHONE CONVERSATION
WITH
BALLIVIAN. MINISTER PEREDA ORDERED LINO PEREZ TO SEND AGENTS TO
SANTA
CRUZ NIGHT OF JULY 23, APPREHEND MENACHO AND ORITZ JUSTINIANO AND
BRING THEM TO LA PAZ FOR INVESTIGATION. THIS ACTION TO BE DONE IN
COMPLETE SECRECY WITHOUT THE KNOWLEDGE OF ANYONE IN SANTA CRUZ.
PRIOR
TO THIS ACTION, HOWEVER, BALLIVIAN AND LINO PEREZ WERE TO CHECK FILES
AND MAKE CERTAIN THAT ORITZ JUSTINANO WAS NOT A MEMBER OF THE JUDICIA
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RY.

7. PEREDA, BALLIVIAN AND LINO PEREZ WERE IN AGREEMENT THAT THE
DISAPPEARANCE FROM SANTA CRUZ OF MENACHO AND ORTIZ JUSTINIANO
WOULD
PROBABLY HALT THE EXTORTION ATTEMPTS AND REDUCE OR ELIMINATE ANY
DANGER TO THE U.S. PRISONERS. I NOTED THAT A U.S. CONSUL WOULD
REMAIN ON THE SCENE FOR THE TIME BEING. DEPENDING UPON THE OUTCOME
OF THE QUESTIONING OF MENACHO AND ORIZ JUSTINIANO, WHICH WOULD
PROBABLY TAKE PLACE JULY 25 OR 26, MINISTER PEREDA WOULD MAKE A
DECISION AS TO HOW TO PROCEED WITH RESPECT TO COL. CAMACHO AND
THE TWO JUDGES. ALSO, THE ADVISABILITY OF MOVING THE PRISONERS FROM
THE SANTA CRUZ JAIL TO LA PAZ WILL RECEIVE FURTHER CONSIDERATION NEXT
WEEK. (FROM A PERSONAL VIEW POINT BECAUSE OF CLIMATE, THE
PRISONERS PREFER THE SANTA CRUZ PRISON AND WILL NOT, RPT NOT WISH TO
BE
MOVED TO LA PAZ UNLESS THEY PRECEIVE A REAL THREAT TO THEIR SAFETY).

8. MINISTER'S COOPERATION AND ACTION WERE AS PROMPT AS
COULD BE HOPED AND BELIEVE DESSIED RESULTS WILL BE ACHIEVED
IN SANTA CRUZ. WILL REPORT IMMEDIATELY ANY NEW DEVELOPMENTS HERE OR
IN
SANTA CRUZ. WILL BE IN TOUCH PERIODICALLY WITH CONSUL KEMP.
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